

September 1, 2023

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN PINELLAS COUNTY ISSUES PRECAUTIONARY SWIM ADVISORY

Avoid contact with contaminated water following Hurricane Idalia



The Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County (DOH-Pinellas) has issued a public health advisory for Clearwater Beach, Mandalay Park and Sand Key due to high bacteria levels. This should be considered a potential risk to the bathing public, and swimming is not recommended. Samples taken were above the threshold for enterococci bacteria. These beaches have been resampled and results are pending.

When resampling indicates that the water is within the satisfactory range, the advisory will be lifted.

An advisory is issued when the beach action value is 70.5 or higher. This is set by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The water samples are being analyzed for enteric bacteria (enterococci) that normally inhabit the intestinal tract of humans and animals, which may cause human disease, infections, or rashes. The presence of enteric bacteria is an indication of fecal pollution, which may come from stormwater runoff, pets and wildlife, and human sewage. The purpose of the [Healthy Beaches Monitoring Program](#) is to determine whether Florida has significant coastal beach water quality problems.

Storm surge can bring contaminants from the land into Gulf waters, temporarily increasing bacteria counts. These numbers can fluctuate as tides and currents move water, making ongoing monitoring important.

If you have open cuts or sores, keep them clean by washing them with soap and water. Apply antibiotic cream to reduce the risk of infection. If a wound or sore develops redness, swelling or drainage, see a physician.

The latest testing on marine (saltwater) beaches will be updated on DOH's website www.floridahealth.gov/environmental-health/beach-water-quality/index.html.

For further information, visit www.floridahealth.gov or www.FloridaDisaster.org.

####

About the Florida Department of Health

The Department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote, and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county, and community efforts.

Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and Twitter at [@HealthyFla](#). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit www.FloridaHealth.gov.